



American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO)

March 29, 2018

Honorable Cathy Stepp
Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Dear Regional Administrator Stepp:

We were greatly relieved by Congress' recent inclusion of \$8.1 billion, plus an additional \$763 million for infrastructure and Superfund, for EPA's FY 2018 budget. This budget will give our hard working men and women the tools they need to fulfill our mission to protect human health and the environment.

Also recognized in the bill was the need to remain close to the communities we serve. This was stated in the explanatory statement: "Committees do not expect the Agency to consolidate or close any regional offices in fiscal year 2018," and "does not include any of the requested funds for workforce reshaping."

The Grosse Ile, Michigan office had been expected to close and be consolidated to Ann Arbor in FY 2018. With Congress' intent that we remain in the communities we serve, the Large Lakes Research Station at Grosse Ile is a prime example of working in, with and for the community. In recent years, Station personnel have lead cleanups at more than 100 hazardous waste sites and major events including the Enbridge pipeline spill, Dow dioxin cleanup, and the Flint drinking water crisis. The Station's Criminal Investigation Division has secured convictions involving the illegal storage and disposal of hazardous waste, the improper removal of asbestos, the illegal export of electronic waste, public corruption, and EPA program fraud. In addition, Grosse Ile personnel have laid the groundwork for cleanup of the Rouge River, a Great Lakes Area of Concern.

From its start in the 1920s as Naval Air Station Grosse Ile through the 1960s as a laboratory for the Public Health Service to today's Large Lakes Research Station, the Grosse Ile office has evolved to meet the needs of the nation. While its role has changed and its name should be updated to reflect its new mission, we agree with Congress that no regional office should be closed or consolidated, including Grosse Ile.

AFGE Local 704

P.O. Box 0799 • Chicago, IL 60690-0799 | Telephone: (312) 886-3575 • Facsimile: (312) 886-3582 • <http://www.AFGElocal704.org>

EPA previously had evaluated closing laboratories and determined that while ORD research efforts at Grosse Ile should be moved, the Station should remain in place to serve the community. A copy of a 2015 EPA briefing report on closure or consolidation of EPA laboratory facilities is enclosed. It seems the current Congressional intent is that the Grosse Ile facility remain in place as a satellite facility through FY 2018. Please advise as to the status of the Grosse Ile facility for FY 2018.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Mikulka", is written over a horizontal line.

Michael Mikulka, President
AFGE Local 704
312-886-6760

Enclosure

cc: Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, MI-12